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DPD 1291-61

1 March 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR : Director of Personnel
THROUGH : Special Support Assistant, DD/S
SUBJECT : Request for Priority Recruitment

1. Development Projects Division, DD/P, has an urgent requirement calling for the recruitment of a top level Aeronautical Engineer in connection with certain of the Division's special activities. The need for this individual is immediate, and is personally endorsed by the Deputy Director (Plans), who has asked that every effort be expended to obtain qualified candidates with the least possible delay.

2. Our objective is to acquire a thoroughly experienced graduate Aeronautical Engineer somewhere in the age group from 35 to 40 years, with a preference for the low side of the age curve. Formal Aeronautical Engineering training at either the Bachelor or Masters Degree level should be combined with a fairly rounded experience profile. Our present thinking is that we would like to have an individual with one or two years in each of the following major fields within Aeronautical Engineering: design, flight test, and structures. Project experience in the air frame field would be very helpful; i.e., having been assigned to carry a single air frame, or a major portion thereof, from design board through initial production and flight testing.

3. The job, as we see it, will entail a considerable amount of travel, with protracted absences from this Headquarters. Ninety-five percent of the travel should be within the Continental limits of the United States. A vital qualification for the successful candidate will be a high degree of articulation, with special emphasis upon the field of reports writing. He should have an ability to write clearly for consumption by individuals at all levels of technical experience. He must be able to have a broad understanding of program development and be capable of monitoring the technical progress of air frame research and development, being able to detect when portions of the program are running out of phase, either from a time or fiscal point of view. If this individual has had any experience in working with strategic metals in the air frame business, we would regard this as an added asset.

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NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☒

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Important among these metals are stainless steel, magnesium, various alloys, and the like. He should also know something about the plasticity of air frame materials. Static engineering experience would also be helpful.

4. As far as sources are concerned, it is our impression that this individual may well be found in the employ of one of the larger air frame companies; i.e., Convair, McDonnell, Boeing, Bell, Chance-Vought, etc. If he is senior enough, he might even be working as an air frame consultant. For example, it is our understanding that Convair in Fort Worth has recently programed a significant number of engineers in this category for early dismissal based on reductions in the backlog. While we are not interested in discards, their reduction has apparently cut fairly deeply.

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5. At this point we are defining the GS grade of the successful candidate as GS-14/15 with the proposal that initial hiring would be at the second step of either grade, and that because of the critical category involved, we feel we can justify the costs of moving the candidate to Washington in the same manner as was done for our Power Plants Engineer, [redacted] in January 1960. If experience rapidly demonstrates that we cannot compete from a salary point of view for high calibre individuals, we are ready to propose a contract salary above the GS-15 level.

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[redacted] Salary above the GS-15 level would call for a really top flight, older candidate and would have to be the subject of negotiation. If you feel that at this stage of the game advertising in technical journals, [redacted] is presently desirable with follow-up interviews by CIA recruiters, I will be interested in discussing this with whomever you designate. I should like to stress again that the Deputy Director (Plans) has assigned the highest priority to all phases of this recruitment. I am confident that your support will be timely and effective.

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JAMES A. CUNNINGHAM JR.
Assistant Chief
DPD-DD/P

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